

**Senate Transportation Committee  
Testimony in Support of  
House bill 6028 and Senate bill 915  
Tuesday, May 29, 2018**

Good morning, Chairman Cole and Committee members, thank you allowing me time to speak in support of House bill 6028 and Senate bill 915.

My name is Howard "Mac" Dashney I am senior advisor and Legislation Committee Chairperson for the Michigan Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT). MAPT represents the interests of all of Michigan's 824 public, private, and contractor school bus fleet administrators. MAPT has been collaborating with the Michigan Training Agency Association of Michigan (TAAM) to prepare these comments. The fifteen, 14 intermediate school districts and Northern Michigan University, TAAM members work on behalf of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to annually provide basic school bus driver training to approximately 4,000 drivers and required biennial continuing education to approximately 16,000 school bus drivers.

In the essence of time, my comments will address both HB-6028 and SB-915.

MAPT and TAAM have two objectives in proposing the changes to the Pupil Transportation Act and the Vehicle Code. They are: 1) cleaning up language that is confusing or no longer necessary in the Acts and 2) revising language due to changes in federal or state laws directly affecting school bus fleet management and or operation.

House bill 6028 revisions to Act 187 of 1990 – "The Pupil Transportation Act"

- Changes to federal regulations require revisions to MCL 257.1811 and MCL 257.1849 (d). Federal regulations no longer dictate the position of radio speakers on a school bus. Therefore, we are proposing the deletion of 257.1811. Act 187 of 1990 adopted federal regulation regarding penalties for serious traffic violations as defined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). FMCSA moved the definition to a regulation and we are proposing the change to agree with the federal regulation.
- Negotiations among the Departments of Education, Transportation and State Police agreed upon wording in MCL 257.1833 (2) describing when black and yellow school buses may be used for non-school related activities, e.g. agricultural use – corn de-tasseling and private carriers occasional charter service to the public or for school-related event transportation. Due to these changes, we propose deleting all of MCL 257.1833 (4).
- Change the specific language in MCL 257.1851 describing basic training for new school bus drivers and adding specific training for a person or persons in charge of school bus operation. This gives MDE and TAAM the flexibility to identify and develop appropriate and up-to-date training curricula for new bus drivers and new fleet managers.
- Changes in Michigan speed limit law and road construction has and may render some school bus stops illegal. Michigan law prohibits children from crossing three (3) or more lanes of traffic to get to a school bus stop. If such a roadway has a speed limit of 45

miles per hour or slower, a school bus may stop in the farthest right lane activating its hazard lights without stopping traffic and pick up or drop off students. Recently road construction updated a five-lane roadway, Romeo Plank Road between 18 and 19-mile road in Macomb County, with pavement upgrades and curbing including raising the speed limit from 45 to 50 miles hour. Raising the speed limit requires bus stops to be completely off the roadway. Installation of curbing prohibited that from happening. School buses now stop using overhead flashing red lights requiring cars to stop in both directions. Thousands of cars per hour during the morning and afternoon bus runs with some stopping and many not put schoolchildren, the school bus, and approaching traffic at risk. Keeping traffic moving reduces the risk to all. We propose changing the speed requirement in MCL 257.1855 (2) (e) from 45 to 50 mph.

- School districts are *transporters of last resort* for specific groups when suitable or economic transportation is not available. Proposed changes to MCL 257.1865 (4), removes the phrase *members of* and replaces it with *attendees of an activity, event, or outing sponsored by* a nonprofit organization. Activities of nonprofit organizations include more than just their member. Without the wording change, districts could not provide the transportation service if conditions and circumstances allowed.

#### Senate bill 915 revisions to Act 300 of 1949 – Michigan Vehicle Code

- MCL257.717 (5) school bus is added to the list of vehicles with a body width not to exceed 102 inches. School buses are required to have a width not greater than 96 inches. Any non-safety related equipment added to the surface area of a school bus increasing that width is illegal. Now, approximately 500 school buses have pass-by camera equipment affixed to the buses exterior. They are illegal and the state police recommended adding school bus to the list of wider vehicles.
- A commercial school bus with a GVWR of 26,001 or more violates Michigan's Wheel Load Limit, "Frost Law." If school buses follow the load limit restrictions during months of March through May, many school bus stop locations will be illegal for that time. Moving stop locations will cause students to walk to new locations potentially increasing risk to pedestrians walking in remote areas. MAPT is proposing adding school buses to those vehicles exempt from Michigan's "Frost Law."

Thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning. I will be happy to respond to comments and or questions.

Submitted by,

*Mac*

Howard "Mac" Dashney  
Michigan Association for Pupil Transportation  
517.420.2856  
h.dashney@comcast.net